

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 911.

SATURDAY, JUNE 11, 1881.

PRICE 1½d.

ISLAND LIFE.

IN looking at the distribution of animal and vegetable life over the various countries of the globe, the question of how the distribution has been effected must have occurred to many. So far as the larger divisions, or continents, of the globe are concerned, no particular difficulty at first sight presents itself; but in the case of the numerous *islands* that dot our larger seas and oceans, we at once find ourselves face to face with considerable perplexities. Take the case of the island of St Helena, for instance. It is situated in the South Atlantic Ocean, eleven hundred miles from the coast of Africa on the east, and eighteen hundred miles from that of South America on the west. When first discovered, nearly four hundred years ago, it was found to be densely covered with a luxuriant forest vegetation, which was afterwards almost entirely destroyed in various ways, not least by the ravages of goats bred from those which the Portuguese at first introduced on St Helena, and which in course of time overran it like a plague, leaving the island almost a desert. The destruction of the trees was also accompanied by the disappearance of many kinds of animals originally found on the island. Then take the case of the Azores in the North Atlantic, situated eight hundred miles from land—a group of islands extremely fertile, and abounding in animals of many kinds. In both these instances, which are only two among thousands, the question which presents itself to the scientific mind is: How did life, whether animal or vegetable, manage to reach these distant, solitary, ocean-girdled spots?

So long as men were content to believe that all the variety of life which we see around us was due to acts of 'special creation,' no serious difficulty was to be found in answering the question; but with a wider and more accurate knowledge of the wonderful processes of nature—of the remarkable operation of natural laws—it was at once found that to account for this distribution of animal and vegetable life on scientific grounds, a problem of

great delicacy and difficulty had to be encountered. The name of Mr Alfred Russell Wallace has long been distinguished in connection with the efforts that have been made to solve this problem, and his recent work on *Island Life* (London: Macmillan & Co.) is his latest and fullest contribution to the literature of the question.

Madagascar may be taken as typical of some of the difficulties of the question. This large island, containing three times the territory of England, presents an extraordinary instance of the anomalies in the distribution of animal life. It lies two hundred and fifty miles from the coast of Africa, and yet its mammalia differ entirely in all essential characteristics from the mammalia of the neighbouring continent. Madagascar possesses no less than sixty-six species of mammals which are not only different from those of Africa, but from those of any other existing continent. 'Africa is prominently characterised by its monkeys, apes, and baboons; by its lions, leopards, and hyenas; by its zebras, rhinoceroses, elephants, buffaloes, giraffes, and numerous species of antelopes. But no one of these animals, nor anything like them, is found in Madagascar.' Of the lemurs, there are six genera and thirty-three species on the island—half its entire mammalian population; and nowhere else are these creatures found in such abundance. Then the carnivora of the island are represented by a peculiar cat-like animal, *Cryptoprocta*, forming a distinct family, and having no allies in any part of the globe. In the rodents—the rats and mice—of the island, one genus is said to be allied to another which is indigenous to America; and the Colubrine snakes are represented in Madagascar, not by African or Asiatic genera, but by two American genera. Of the lizards of the island, certain of the genera are again found to be allied to families which are exclusively American.

These facts are very extraordinary, for they show us, that while few of the animals on the island are represented by African families, many others are represented among existing mammals only by families to be found in the far-distant

and utterly foreign continent of America. The explanation which Mr Wallace gives of this peculiar state of things appears to be a reasonable one—namely, that the island of Madagascar was at one time connected with, or formed part of, the continent of Africa, but, with its stock of mammals, was detached therefrom at a period long prior to the descent into Africa of the different race of animals which now inhabit that continent. Thus we have a collection of mammals existing on the island such as we may suppose to have inhabited Africa previous to the immigration of its present mammalia. These have almost completely obliterated all traces of their predecessors, for whom we must therefore now look to the piece of land which was detached from the continent while the older race of animals still inhabited it, and which now forms the great island of Madagascar.

But while islands offer the best subjects for the study of distribution, the continents nevertheless present many interesting phenomena. Mr Wallace tells us, for example, that when an Englishman travels by the nearest sea-route from Great Britain to Northern Japan, he passes by countries very unlike his own, both in aspect and natural productions. He skirts the sunny isles of the Mediterranean, the sands and date-palms of Egypt, the cocoa groves of Ceylon, and many other places, and after a circuitous journey of thirteen thousand miles finds himself in Japan. Yet what is his astonishment—after placing between him and England such enormous tracts of land, and with so little in them that is familiar to the English eye—to find himself once more in a country the natural objects of which are in many instances identical with those of his far-off home! Thus, 'he finds the woods and fields tenanted by tits, hedge-sparrows, wrens, wagtails, larks, red-breasts, thrushes, buntings, and house-sparrows; some absolutely identical with our own feathered friends, others so closely resembling them, that it requires a practical ornithologist to tell the difference. If he is fond of insects, he notices many butterflies and a host of beetles which, though on close examination they are found to be distinct from ours, are yet of the same general aspect, and seem just what might be expected in any part of Europe. There are also of course many birds and insects which are quite new and peculiar; but these are by no means so numerous or conspicuous as to remove the general impression of a wonderful resemblance between the productions of such remote islands as Britain and Yesso.'

On the other hand, if an inhabitant of Australia sails to New Zealand, a distance of less than thirteen hundred miles, he will find himself in a country whose productions are totally unlike those of his own. 'Kangaroos and wombats there are none, the birds are almost all entirely new, insects are very scarce, and quite unlike the handsome or strange Australian forms; while even the vegetation is all changed, and no gum-tree, or wattle, or grass-tree meets the traveller's eye.' But still more striking contrasts than these are to be met with. There are two islands in the Malay Archipelago, named Bali and Lombok, each about as large as Corsica, and separated by a narrow strait of but fifteen miles. 'Yet these islands differ far more from each other in their birds and quadrupeds than do England and Japan. The birds of

the one are extremely *unlike* those of the other, the difference being such as to strike even the most ordinary observer.' Such an instance is useful 'as proving that mere distance is one of the least important of the causes which have determined the likeness or unlikeness in the animals of different countries.'

Instances of a similar kind might be given from the western hemisphere; but the above are sufficient to indicate the nature of the problem with which the scientist has to deal in determining the laws and incidental causes that have to do with the phenomena of distribution. Many of the questions arising out of this problem are of singular complexity and interest; and even the solution which Mr Wallace's long experience of the subject enables him to attempt, may not in many points be accepted without considerable discussion in the scientific world.

One of the first things to note in considering the solution which our author advances, is, that the geographical divisions of the globe do not correspond to its zoological divisions. Thus the term 'Europe' does not give, with any approach to accuracy, the range of any one genus of mammals or birds. They may range into Siberia, or into Asia Minor, or Palestine, or North Africa. Consequently, for the purposes of the naturalist, the old geographical divisions are discarded, and a series of zoological divisions substituted. Thus Europe, with north temperate Africa and Asia, form what is called the Palearctic Region; Africa south of the Sahara, the Ethiopian Region; Tropical Asia, the Oriental; Australia, the Australian; North America, the Nearctic; and South America, the Neotropical Region. The various families of birds and mammals are not distributed over this region in any regular or continuous way; but are often discontinuous, and appear as it were in patches, to connect which, or to account for which, is one of the problems of distribution to be solved. Hence it is necessary to make some inquiry into the different powers of dispersal of animals and plants, into the nature of the barriers that limit their migrations, and into the character of the geological or climatal changes which have favoured or checked such migrations.

It is impossible within the limits of a magazine article to give any adequate idea of all that is involved in the elucidation of these important questions; though a few words may be said on the interesting subject of the dispersal of animals. As is readily conceived, a wide extent of ocean forms an almost insuperable barrier to the dispersal of all land animals, and even of birds; for, though the latter can fly far, yet they cannot go thousands of miles without rest or food, unless in the case of aquatic birds, who can find both rest and food on the surface of the ocean. Without artificial help, therefore, neither mammalia nor land-birds can pass over very wide oceans. 'The exact width they can pass over is not determined, but we have a few facts to guide us. Contrary to the common notion, pigs can swim very well, and have been known to swim over five or six miles of sea; and the wide distribution of pigs in the eastern hemisphere may be due to this power. It is almost certain, however, that they would never voluntarily swim away from their native land; and if carried out to sea by a flood, they would certainly endeavour to return to the shore. We cannot

therefore believe that they would ever swim over fifty or a hundred miles of sea; and the same may be said of all the large mammalia. Deer also swim well, but there is no reason to believe that they would venture out of sight of land.

'With the smaller, and especially with the arboreal mammalia, there is a much more effectual way of passing over the sea by means of floating trees, or those floating islands which are often found at the mouths of great rivers. Sir Charles Lyell describes such floating islands which were encountered among the Moluccas, on which trees and shrubs were growing on a stratum of soil which even formed a white beach round the margin of each raft. Among the Philippine Islands, similar rafts with trees growing on them have been seen after hurricanes; and it is easy to understand how, if the sea were tolerably calm, such a raft might be carried along by a current, aided by the wind acting on the trees, till after a passage of several weeks, it might arrive safely on the shores of some land hundreds of miles away from its starting-point. Such small animals as squirrels and mice might have been carried away on the trees which formed part of such a raft, and might thus colonise a new island; though, as it would require a pair of the same species to be carried away together, such accidents would no doubt be rare. Insects, however, and land-shells would almost certainly be abundant on such a raft or island; and in this way we may account for the wide dispersal of many species of both these groups.'

But such causes as these can scarcely be accepted as sufficient to account for the dispersal of mammalia as a whole; and whenever a considerable number of the mammals of two countries are found to exhibit distinct marks of relationship, Mr Wallace thinks we may be sure that an actual land connection, or at all events an approach to within a very few miles of each other, has at one time existed. A great number of identical families and genera are in fact to be found in all the great continents, and the present distribution of land renders it easy to see how this dispersal has been effected. All the great land masses radiate from the arctic regions as a common centre, the only break being at Behring's Strait, which is so shallow, that a rise of less than a thousand feet would form a broad isthmus connecting Asia and America. Continuity of land may therefore be said to be general over the globe; the chief exceptions to this being Australia and a number of large islands. These islands are divided into two classes—(1) those which have been formed in the ocean by volcanic or coralline agency; and (2) those which have simply been detached from continents by the sinking or submergence of the connecting land. On the first class of islands, the oceanic, there is no trace of indigenous mammalia or amphibia, but they usually contain an abundance of birds and insects, and a sprinkling of reptiles. Continental islands, on the other hand, are never far from land, and always contain some land mammals and amphibia, as well as representatives of other classes and orders. It is therefore suggested that all the animals and birds which inhabit the oceanic islands must have reached them by crossing the ocean; or they must be the descendants of ancestors who did so; and that those which inhabit islands adjacent to continents,

may partly have been left there when the separation from the mainland was effected.

But, in Mr Wallace's opinion, the key to the many difficulties which have hitherto prevented the student from forming a clear conception as to the way in which the distribution of life over the globe has been effected, is to be found in the permanency of land masses, and the evolution of species. Some of the author's views will, as already observed, provoke discussion; yet these views, if found to be right, will rank in the future as conclusions of primary importance. He holds, for instance, that in the main the great land and ocean areas of the present time have been permanent ever since the beginning of the geological record. The great ocean depths have been stable; but the shallows and their associated land areas have been subject to incessant changes of level relatively to the surface of the sea, in consequence of the combined influences of upheaval, subsidence, and denudation. The result of this theory is, that while the same area may have been at one time sea, at another land, in frequent succession, yet the great land areas have always been approximately where they are now. Then as regards the effect of the evolution of species on the dispersal of animals, he considers he has established the fact that wild animals are by no means so constant in size and minor characteristics as has generally been assumed. In some extreme cases, it is found that the size of proportional parts may vary to the extent of twenty-five per cent.; and that in many cases it may be three, four, six, or nine per cent. These great variations, in conjunction with incessant climatic and other changes, are sufficient, in his opinion, to account for the present distribution of animals into zoological regions and districts.

So much for his general conclusions. But too much stress must not, as Mr Wallace points out, be laid on isolated causes. The phenomena of distribution cannot be adequately perceived if looked at from a specialised point of view; since every fact is but a link in a great connected series of changes, the beginning of which is to be found in ages long since gone by, and the continuation of which will stretch into the distant future. It is a singularly complicated and difficult question, yet presents points of immense interest to students of nature, who, whether they should or should not agree with Mr Wallace's conclusions, will not rise from the perusal of his book without a deep impression of the masterly way in which he has treated a subject at once so wide and so complex.

THE FORTUNES OF BERTRAM OAKLEY.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE RESCUE.

THE moon was young, the night was dark, and the ebb-tide, aided by a brisk westerly wind, went rushing furiously down. The boats, which, under Bertram's leadership, had pushed out into mid-stream from the slimy stairs below the *Shipwrights' Arms*, went fast too, strong backs bending to the oars, strong arms waiting, idle. Along the lower reaches of the Thames, everybody who lives anyhow, by the water and the keels that ride upon it, can row a bit, as the saying is. But the rowing on this occasion was more vigorous than skilful, the boats yawed in a manner that wasted time and

toil, and it was not easy to avoid awkward contact with vessels at anchor. 'Ahoy, ahoy, hoy there!' rang out the hoarse hail from aboard a South Shields or Newcastle collier, as they passed. 'Boats, ahoy!'

'What cheer?' inquired the big shipwright who pulled the stroke-oar in Bertram's boat, whose designation in the Yard was Long Tom, and who had been the first to volunteer.

'I'm Cap'en of this brig,' responded the interlocutor, a large man in red flannel shirt and Guernsey blue suit, as he leaned over the grimy gangway; 'and I've noticed something is wrong with the *Golden Gate*—the new full-rigged clipper a cable's length away. She's slipped her moorings, and gone down with the tide, and I heard a row on board, and cries of "Murder!" and "Help!"'

'Just as I feared!' exclaimed Bertram excitedly. —'Thank you, Captain.—Give way, lads!' And off went the boats, the oars quivering as the men put their strength into the stroke. It was needful to steer carefully, for half-a-dozen clumsy coal-hoys and red-sailed lighters were moored in the track, and when the boats gained clear water it was evident that the *Golden Gate* was gone from her anchorage. There were the tall masts dimly visible, afar off.

'She's rounding into Bully's Reach,' cried a waterman, as he espied the drifting vessel, 'and she'll ground on Drowned Point, I bet a hundred.'

'Pull, men, and pull with a will!' exclaimed Bertram, as he gathered up the tiller lines, and steered his best. Round went the three boats into Bully's Reach, Bertram's leading, just as the tall ship broached to on a half-sunken tongue of land—Drowned Point, no doubt. There were carts visible on shore. The rescuers could even hear the stamping of the horses and the cracking of the drivers' whips. Three or four small boats were buzzing around the ship, like flies around a slaughtered animal. Plainly, the robbers were eager to make sure of their booty.

'Hurrah!' shouted the sturdy wrights, on catching sight of the enemy. It was impolitic, but it was British; it was a manly impulse that prompted the cheer, which Bertram could not check. Frenchmen, I am afraid, under the same circumstances would neither have cheered nor fought. It takes a great idea, or a dribble of money at stake, to make the modern Gaul exert himself. But these Thames shipwrights came on to the fight, as if fighting were sport.

'Hurrah! We'll trim their jerkins! Collar hold of her with the boat-hook!' bawled Long Tom, who was presumably a Kentish man, and talked the dialect of the land of hops and cherries.

'Landsharks!'—'Ware!'—'Rouse!'—'Knock their brains out!' were the responsive cries on board the stranded ship. There were hard knocks and fierce resistance as the shipwrights forced their way up the ship's side, holding on to chain and rope, scrambling and avoiding as best they might the blows that were aimed at them from the deck. Bertram, who was among the foremost boarders, received a heavy blow or two, and might have got a fatal stab from the drawn 'snickersnee' of grim Captain Jack, whose wicked eyes shone brighter than the knife-blade, had not Long Tom the shipwright wrenched the weapon out of the

old river pirate's gnarled hand. But the struggle was yet uncertain when the galley of the Thames Police dashed up, and there were daring men and glittering cutlasses swarming over the ship's bows; and the rogues who had been busy, with bag and hatchet, among cabins and storerooms of the new clipper, fled breathlessly, and the carts started at a gallop, and all was rout and dismay.

'One, two, four, six prisoners,' said the business-like Superintendent of the Thames Police; 'but one of them is Captain Jack.'

Captain Jack, with Long Tom's knee pressing on his deep chest, as he lay on the deck, answered by a curse. No chieftain of a Red Indian tribe, Comanche or Sioux, captured by the white men, could have been more stubborn than this obstinate desperado. He hardly knew, as he lay, gasping but unconquered, whether to swear the most at his late confederates or at his captors; so he swore roundly at both. 'A lot of helpless duffers!' 'Malingering lubbers that couldn't look a cow in the face!' such were the mildest terms in which he described his associates; while he branded the police as 'white-livered sons of sea-cooks that durstn't—no, they durstn't,' perhaps missing the kicks and cuffs which, half a century ago, were wont to lend zest to a caption.

'Clap the darbies on him! Put the bracelets on the kit of them!' said the Superintendent at last; and the touch of the steel handcuffs seemed to produce a sobering effect on the old man, and on the five scowling or snivelling knaves who were also in custody. Some mischief had been done, but not much. Black Juba lay at the entrance of his cook's galley, bleeding and stunned; while Trenchard the ex-man-of-war's man, and the two boys, were found in the fore-castle, roughly handled, but not seriously hurt, and with pieces of ratline tightly knotted round their galled wrists. Mr Swaine the storekeeper, who had hidden himself at the first alarm, was ignominiously unearthed in the bread-room, and prayed Bertram and the others, whom he took for pirates, to spare the life of the father of a family.

Not much had been spoiled—nothing, or next to nothing, carried off. A hundred pounds, or at the outside, two, might pay for silk and gold and brass hacked away, or ripped off with the knife, for doors smashed, and stores purloined. But Juba the black, whose head was fortunately of average negro thickness, and whom a jorum of rum-and-water, and a little rough kindness, greatly revived, had really been severely maltreated; and Bertram himself had a cut on the forehead and a bruised wrist, while most of the men had sustained contusions or other hurts.

'Still, hurrah for our side!' shouted Long Tom the wright in triumph, though the blood trickled down his face as he said it, and every good fellow on the honest men's side joined in the cheer that floated far over the desolate Essex flats and the Kentish marsh opposite. Perhaps the happiest person present was the shrewd Superintendent of the Thames Police, as, with the prisoners, ironed, and hustled into the thwarts and stern-sheets, he bade his crew row back to the station stairs. He had broken up a formidable gang. He had saved property, and life perhaps. Although Parliament was sitting, the morning papers would find room for some praise for the zealous and able chief of the

civil force that had captured Captain Jack. But even in his cup of bliss there was a drop of gall. The gamekeeper who has trapped the pheasant-eating fox, the French *garde forestier* who has shot the wary wolf so long the terror of the fold, feels a sort of regret as he pockets his reward. Where shall he get another wolf, or discover a fresh fox? With the conviction of the aged pirate, the Superintendent felt that he was parting with the last element of romance in his profession.

Then a guard was set. It would need tugs, and steam, and tow-ropes, and cables, to bring the clipper back next day to her anchorage; but in the meantime it scarcely required the presence of the men who stayed on board, or the glow of lamps and fires to scare away the thieves, already scared, who in far-off squalid dens were bewailing the overthrow of the promising project which young Bertram had spoiled.

CHAPTER XXIX.—PROMOTION.

Those were pleasant days, pleasant weeks, which succeeded Bertram's exploit of the retaking of the *Golden Gate*. That grand ship had spread her acres of snowy sail, and on them been wafted over endless seas to far-off Australia. But Mr Mervyn remained, and so did kind, frank Mr Arthur Lynn, and so did the rough shipwrights to whom the young man, their leader, was a hero. Bertram never forgot how his cheeks had tingled with manly shame when Mr Mervyn, his employer, had given him public thanks, and public praise, before all the clerks and workmen; or the cheering; or Arthur's friendly pressure of the hand. They had offered him no money, and he was glad of that, though pecuniary rewards had been liberally dealt out among the rugged wrights who had fought to protect the property of Mervyn & Co. But Mr Mervyn had hinted at promotion, less as a boon than as a well-earned recompense; nor was it long before the promotion came.

One fine evening in the early summer, when there were seas of May-bloom on the aged hawthorns—Queen Elizabeth's hawthorns—in the so-called Happy Valley of that royal Park of Greenwich where once monarchs aimed the arrow, or spurred the steed, to the detriment of the dappled deer, Bertram was returning from a solitary ramble under the leafy shades of the spreading Spanish chestnut trees, when his way led him past the colonnades and lawns and stately roofs of that Naval Hospital which was once a palace, and is now an anomaly, and past the great Greenwich hosteleries which overlook the Thames, and where whitebait dinners, ministerial, municipal, or private, are still solemnly eaten. There was a drag at the door—there were two drags at the door, whether of the orthodox *Crown and Sceptre* or of the more glittering *Trafalgar* matters not, no unusual sight on an evening in the latter part of June. Many Londoners, who have the means and the leisure, prefer to go on wheels, as in the days when macadamised roads were a wonder of the world, to suburban pleasure-resorts, instead of being dependent on the snorting steam-horse. These two four-in-hand carriages were not, it may be conjectured, the private property of any members of the British aristocracy chronicled by Burke and Debrett. There was silver-mounted harness that glittered and rattled as the sleek-coated horses

tossed their heads and champed their bits, and some flaring device of mock-heraldry was emblazoned on the panels; but the whole equipage had a coarse, flashy air, and the behaviour of the leering helpers who held the vicious-eyed horses by the bridle, or rubbed hissing at the gleaming lamps and burnished door-handles, was barely respectful. Hotel servants can generally form a tolerably correct estimate of their masters' customers. As Bertram lingered, the party of revellers came out, young men mostly, in evening costume, with flashing studs and spotless shirt-fronts and flushed faces, and voices thick with wine and foolish talk, laughing as they came. Among them were seniors, with dyed hair and moustache, or purple whiskers looming large, hollow-eyed, cruel and keen, hawks among the pigeons. Foremost of all was one whom Bertram fancied that he knew.

Nat Lee—the vagabond of the ditch—the bruised and plundered welsher, who had been thankful, last year, to lean on Bertram's arm, and to sip brandy that Bertram paid for—the former denizen of Rundle's Hotel, Limbo Street, Piccadilly—could this be Nat Lee? A distinguished gentleman, it would seem, well dressed, perfumed, and with a self-confident bearing that just stopped short of vulgar swagger. It was easy to see, by the deference which the others paid him, and by the air of assurance with which he gave orders, that he was the lion of the party. Showering small silver about him with a lavishness which procured him many a 'Luck to your honour!' and 'Thank ye, my lord!' from the hangers-on of the hotel, he climbed to the box-seat of one of the two drags, and gathered up the reins in his gloved hand.

'Are you all right there?' he called out. It certainly was the voice, as well as the face, of Nat Lee.

'No, no!' cried another voice, in answer, the voice of a foolish-faced, florid young man, whom any Jew, or any waiter in Christendom, would have accurately classed as a patrician, and none the less as a dolt. 'Wait for me, Fitzgerald, I only want another cigar, old man.'

Fitzgerald! Could that resounding patronymic be the lawful property of the man who had once been a clerk in the Dulchester Bank, and whom Bertram identified with his former disreputable roadside acquaintance. Lee, or Fitzgerald, whichever he was, caught Bertram's eye, changed colour, and turned away. 'Look sharp!' he cried, as his young friend clambered to his perch on the roof; and then, with a savage stroke of the whip and jerk of the reins, drove off.

As Bertram crossed in the ferry-boat to Black-wall, his mind dwelt, in spite of himself, on his recent encounter with one who was, he felt convinced, no other than the wayside vagabond whom he had found in evil plight in the ditch. There are ups as well as downs in the careers of adventurers as bold and shrewd as Nat Lee, and even his assumption of an aristocratic surname was not, after a minute's reflection, as unaccountable to Bertram as it had seemed at the first. There are silly lads among the golden youth of London, as of Paris or Vienna, ready enough to accept the sparkling counterfeit for sterling coin, on race-course and in billiard or card room, so long as champagne flows and laughter rings, and

who reverence knowledge of the world, according to their narrow ethics, beyond all earthly gifts.

Had this man, Bertram asked himself, any connection with the misfortunes of his early benefactor, good Dr Denham—anything to link him with Uncle Walter, the hard, polished virtuoso of Kensington? Certainly, this Nat Lee, if such were his name, had spoken of himself, and of the Old Bank at Dulchester, as though his former doings there had left an indelible impression upon his mind. Certainly, too, he had made bitter mention, grinding his teeth resentfully the while, of some enemy who should, in default of black-mail, pay in person or in reputation for the wrong he had done. But it was faulty logic, so Bertram felt, to identify this nameless enemy with Mr Walter Denham; and even granting that his scampish acquaintance had treasured up some grudge, after all these years, against the younger son of his old master, that by no means implied that Nat Lee had anything to tell, the telling of which would benefit the doctor's orphaned daughters.

As the ferry-boat crossed from the Kentish side of Thames to the bleak flats of the Essex shore, Bertram's gaze turned instinctively to the spot where, not many weeks since, the *Golden Gate* had lain at anchor. It seemed but yesterday that the attack upon the fine new ship had been followed by the defeat of the marauders. Already—for Metropolitan prisoners do not now languish before trial, as did the late Mrs Brownrigg of ogreish memory, according to the *Anti-Jacobin*—Captain Jack had been sentenced to a lengthy term of penal servitude, well deserved, and sundry of his accomplices to minor degrees of the same punishment. Bertram could still see the hardened face of the incorrigible old sinner, as he stood scowling in the dock, and remembered the defiant 'Thank ye, my lord—that won't hurt me!' with which this veteran foe to social order had received the judicial doom. The judge had praised Bertram in open court for his bravery and devotion; and the spectators then, and the newspapers afterwards, had echoed the praise. It seemed quite an old story now, although it had happened so recently.

When Bertram reached his lodging he was surprised to find his employer's nephew, Arthur Lynn, there, and waiting for him.

'No, there's nothing wrong,' said the good-natured young man, laughing at Bertram's anxious looks. 'Quite the contrary. My news to-night is good news, or I shouldn't have been in such a hurry to bring it to you, myself. You see, Bertram, that my uncle and I have been planning for you a little surprise—that's all.'

'A surprise—Mr Arthur—for me!' echoed Bertram, scarcely able to believe his ears.

'Why, yes,' replied Arthur Lynn, who had seated himself on the narrow window-sill, and was swinging himself backwards and forwards with an air of simple-hearted enjoyment. 'You surely did not think that Mr Mervyn and I imagined we had wiped out the debt of gratitude we owed you for your conduct the other night, by the cheap payment of a hand-shake and a few words of thanks? We at anyrate'—

'There was no debt—nothing due—and the gratitude, dear sir, was all on my side,' burst in Bertram eagerly, and flushing crimson. 'What

do I not owe to you—I, who was a homeless lad, almost a beggar, when you took me in and gave me what I craved for, the opportunity to work and be useful! It is your kind heart, Mr Arthur, that exaggerates the little I did—my plain duty.'

'It is your noble spirit, my lad, as my uncle said this very day, that leads you to make light of your own courage and sense and prudence,' answered Arthur Lynn, shaking his head. 'However, Bertram, we acknowledge our obligation to you, and mean to prove it otherwise than by mere compliments. I did not know that a vacancy would occur so soon; but—You are aware that we have a branch building Yard, for yachts chiefly, and steam-vessels in which speed signifies more than stowage, at Southampton, are you not?'

Yes, Bertram knew that.

'Mr Weston is the manager of the Yard, and has been so these fifteen years. He is an able agent, and an experienced one; but he cannot attend to everything single-handed, and with one pair of eyes to rely upon, especially as we are extending the business, and shall instantly send down a fresh batch of shipwrights, with Long Tom for their foreman. We want an Assistant Manager, too. Can you guess whom we have picked out for the post?' said Arthur Lynn; 'and if so, will you accept it?'

'You are too generous to me, Mr Arthur,' said Bertram, almost sobbing. 'How can I thank'—

'Only go on as well as you have done before, that's all, and it will be our good fortune to have put the right man in the right place,' interrupted Arthur, catching up his hat. 'These papers—see, I will leave them on the table—will give you an idea of your duties, the salary, and so forth; and on Wednesday, at latest, you should arrange to start for Southampton.—By Jove, I shall lose the train! Good-night!'

And Bertram was left alone. Strange, that when the first surprise of the good news had calmed itself, the image of Rose Denham should float before his mental vision. 'I shall meet her there,' he thought.

A DAY OR TWO IN THE ISLE OF MAN.

THE Isle of Man possesses few rivals as a field of operation for the hardy pedestrian not afraid to risk the traditional horrors of a few hours' sea-voyage. Pure bracing air, beauty and variety of both inland and coast scenery—the former of course on a small scale—and a curious feeling of remoteness, which brings a delicious sense of relief for a time from the cares and labours of a busy world, combine to render this quaint little island the very place for a ten days' walking tour. It must be frankly confessed, however, that by fastidious persons a drawback to the island as a place of resort may be found in the great number of visitors who overrun its towns every summer. But to those who do not mind coming in occasional contact with such, the island will be found to be a most agreeable spot in which to spend a holiday.

Little is definitely known about the early history of the Isle of Man. The people are of Celtic origin, the Manx language having strong affinities

with the Irish and the Gaelic of the Highlands. The island was long under the rule of the Earls of Derby, from whom it passed by succession to the Dukes of Athole, and it was not till 1829 that the Crown obtained full possession of it, by the purchase of the rights and privileges of the latter family. It has never been represented in the Imperial Parliament, but possesses an independent form of government, to which it adheres with the utmost tenacity. The executive power lies in the Governor, who is appointed by the Crown. The Parliament, or as it is called, the Court of Tynwald, consists of the Governor and Council, forming the upper, and the House of Keys, forming the lower house. In 1866 a reform bill was passed, enfranchising the people who elect the members of the House of Keys, a general election taking place every seven years. Justice is administered by two Deemsters, or judges appointed by the Crown, and by the High Bailiffs of Douglas, Ramsey, Castletown, and Peel. The tax-gatherer and the rate-collector are almost unknown in the Isle of Man. There is neither income-tax nor poor-rate, and only in the towns is there any local rate, and that but a small one.

The best view of Douglas Bay, which is the natural approach to the Isle of Man, is obtained when nearing the island from Liverpool; the whole outline of the coast, with its variations of light and shade, its green hills, its dark cliffs, and its rocky headlands, here appearing to advantage. The first object that strikes the eye is Maughold Head, a bold promontory, forming the north-eastern point of the island, and which seems to start up suddenly from the water's edge; while behind it, the summits of Snaefell and North Barrule, the two highest mountains on the island, rise gradually into view. Towards the north, the coast is bold and precipitous, with lofty cliffs, that dip sheer down into the water, divided here and there by deep gullies, through which the mountain streams find their way to the sea. Southwards, the high lands shelve gradually down, till at Castletown the country is quite flat. From this point the land rises once more, till its rugged coast-line terminates in the Calf, a huge mass of isolated rock, separated from the rest of the island by a gully or channel some five hundred yards in width.

The town of Douglas is a curious mixture of the old and the new. The old part, which is chiefly confined to the vicinity of the quay and harbour, reminds one of Dieppe, with its narrow tortuous alleys, its quaint old market-place, and its all-pervading odour of fish. The only building in Douglas which has any pretensions to architectural beauty or historic interest is Castle Mona, the ancient residence of the Dukes of Athole when they were lords of Man. It is an imposing-looking building of massive limestone, and stands in a commanding position on the margin of the bay; but it too has yielded to modern necessities, and has been transformed into an hotel.

But as it is not in the town of Douglas that the chief beauties of the Isle of Man are to be seen, we must seek for the charms of Mona elsewhere. A walk across the island from Douglas to Peel—a distance of some ten or twelve miles—will give the traveller a good idea of the prevailing characteristics of the inland scenery. The road is for the most part a level one, running through the valleys of the Glas and the Neb, streams which

can hardly be dignified by the name of river, being the exact counterpart of Tennyson's 'Brook.' If not the 'grayling,' at all events the 'lusty trout' may be found here, and will constitute an additional element of attraction to the angler. Indeed, a good day's sport may be had on any of the chief streams of the island, the best of which perhaps are the Sulby river and the stream running through Glen Rushen. Trees are not plentiful on the Peel Road or elsewhere; but the green hills which bound the valleys on either side attract the eye of the pedestrian by their variations of shade and colour, and the picturesque form of their outlines. Midway between Douglas and Peel, the road skirts the base of the mountain of Greeba—a hill which, as regards the Isle of Man, is the centre of the earth, and whence, on a fine day, England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland may be clearly descried. Near to it stands the chapel of St Ninian, a ruin with a curious legend attached, which may perhaps be cited as a good example of the folk-lore in which the Manx people delight. Tradition says that the completion of the chapel was hindered by an evil spirit, or to give it its vernacular name, a *buggane*. The fiend apparently did not object to the construction of the walls; but whenever an attempt was made to cover in the building, he either carried off the roof bodily, or smashed it in by supernatural force. Anyhow, the chapel never was completed, and remains without a roof to this day, though perhaps the sceptic will not find it difficult to account for this phenomenon without having recourse to supernatural agencies.

At St John's, about three miles on the Douglas side of Peel, is Tynwald Hill, an artificial mound some eighty feet in diameter, and about twelve feet in height. Here, on the 5th of July each year, are promulgated all the laws that have been passed by the Manx Parliament during the preceding twelve months. The ceremony, which is somewhat imposing, is made the occasion of a great gathering of people from all parts of the island. The Governor, the Deemsters, the Coroners, and the other chief officials attend service in the chapel of St John, and then walk in grand procession to Tynwald Hill. Here they take up their positions, and the laws are proclaimed with due solemnity, the people meanwhile standing in a circle round the mound. This custom is said to date back more than a thousand years, and, as the Manx people are intensely conservative, may not improbably last a thousand more. The rest of the day is given up to merrymaking and the business of the fair, which is always held at St John's on Tynwald Day.

Peel itself is nothing more than a prosperous fishing village, and is chiefly remarkable for the ruins of its celebrated castle. Every one who has read *Pevensey of the Peak* must be familiar with Sir Walter Scott's wonderfully accurate and graphic description of this famous stronghold, which he never saw. Standing some fifty yards from the land, on a rugged island, which is in reality the spur of a ridge of rocky hills gradually shelving down to the shore, Peel Castle cannot be surpassed for romance and picturesqueness of situation. Formerly, an almost impregnable fortress, owing to the massiveness of its walls and the strength of its position, for the last hundred years it has been nothing more than a beautiful ruin,

the red sandstone of which it is built having crumbled away under the fury of the storms to which it has been exposed for many centuries. Waldron's description of Peel Castle, as it appeared at the beginning of last century, is exceedingly quaint and interesting, though not a few of his statements might challenge comparison with some of the wondrous stories to be found in the pages of Sir John Mandeville. He says: 'This castle, for its situation, antiquity, strength, and beauty, might justly come in for one of the wonders of the world. Art and Nature seem to have vied with each other in the model, nor ought the most minute particular to escape observation. . . . Being entered, you find yourself in a wide plain, in the midst of which stands the castle, encompassed by four churches, three of which time has so much decayed, that there is little remaining besides the walls, and some few tombs, which seem to have been erected with so much care as to perpetuate the memory of those buried in them till the final dissolution of all things. The fourth is kept a little better in repair; but not so much for its own sake, though it has been the most magnificent of them all, as for a chapel within it, which is appropriated to the use of the bishop, and has under it a prison, or rather dungeon, for those offenders who are so miserable as to incur the spiritual censure. This is certainly one of the most dreadful places that imagination can form. The sea runs under it, through the hollows of the rock, with such a continual roar, that you would think it were every moment breaking in upon you; and over it are the vaults for burying the dead. Within it are thirteen pillars, on which the whole chapel is supported. They have a superstition that whatsoever stranger goes to see this cavern out of curiosity, and omits to count the pillars, shall do something to occasion being confined there.'

Peel Castle is now merely a romantic pile of ruins. Two of the chapels mentioned by Waldron, still remain, dedicated respectively to St German and St Patrick. The former, indeed, is still the cathedral of the diocese of Sodor and Man; for although it has long been in a dilapidated condition, it has never yet been replaced by another, and open-air services are held amongst the ruins during the summer months. A few interesting inscriptions may still be deciphered on the tombstones in this chapel; though of the diversities of tongues mentioned by Waldron, not more than two or three can be traced at the present day. The most curious of these epitaphs is one to the memory of Samuel Rutter, formerly Bishop of the diocese, who was buried here in 1663. It is in Latin, composed by the good prelate himself, who invites those who visit his tomb to be merry at the expense of the smallness and gloom of the episcopal residence. The consecrated portion of the castle was used as a burying-ground by the inhabitants of Peel till a comparatively recent date. The story goes that a whole funeral cortège was one day ingulfed during their transit to the cathedral while a violent storm was raging; and the horror inspired by this circumstance stimulated the townspeople to provide a suitable cemetery on the mainland. On the top of a hill overlooking the sea near Peel Castle, is a remarkable burying-place in the form of a tower, bearing the suggestive name of 'Corrin's Folly.' This Corrin is said to

have been a rigid Dissenter, and wishing to show his utter disregard of the prejudice in favour of burial in consecrated ground, constructed this strange mausoleum for himself and his family.

The walk across the mountains from Peel to Port Erin is one of the grandest in the island. The coast is bold and rocky, indented by frowning headlands and precipitous gullies. The views of the sea and cliffs on the one hand, and of the mountains and glens on the other, are exceedingly fine, and gain by contrast with each other. But of all the majestic and precipitous headlands to be found in the Isle of Man, Spanish Head, the most southerly point, is the grandest. It rises straight out of the sea to a height of more than three hundred feet, pierced by numerous chasms, which bear evident traces of a volcanic origin. It derives its name from the fact that several of the ships of the Spanish Armada were dashed to pieces here in the awful storm which proved England's best ally. Opposite Spanish Head is the Calf of Man, a rocky island, some five miles in circumference, but containing very little cultivated ground. It is, in fact, a mere pile of lofty crags, some five hundred feet high, inhabited only by rabbits and sea-fowl. The Sound which separates the Calf from the mainland is full of dangerous currents; and the iron-bound coast in this neighbourhood has been the scene of many a fearful wreck. Perched high up on Spanish Head lies the village of Craigneesh, a primitive little spot, inhabited by the most primitive and conservative of folk, who pride themselves on being the real aborigines of the island. They neither marry nor give in marriage outside of their own circle, and hold themselves as much aloof from the rest of the world as is possible in these days. Inability to speak English is with them considered an accomplishment, though, happily, the progress of education is daily more and more restricting this accomplishment to the elders of the community.

About four miles to the north-east is Castletown, the ancient capital of the island. It still retains the nominal distinction of being the metropolis, though the seat of government has been virtually transferred to Douglas. Castle Rushen, to which the town owes its name, is the chief fortress of the island, and is said to have been built by Guttred the Dane, a son of King Orry, the great King of Man, about the middle of the tenth century. Its walls are of immense thickness, in some places not less than twelve feet; and time has so solidified the mortar used in cementing the huge blocks of limestone, that it is now as hard as the stone itself. The walk from Douglas to Peel and Port Erin, and back again by Castletown, embraces the southern half of the island, which is in many respects the most interesting. A first-rate walker might manage it all in one day; but he would undoubtedly miss a good deal by hurrying over it. To enjoy the scenery thoroughly, at least two days would be required; and three or four might be spent pleasantly enough on the way.

The walk from Douglas to Ramsey—the chief town in the north of the island—is for the most part within sight of the sea; indeed, in some places the road is hewn out of the solid mass of an overhanging cliff, like the famous Axenstrasse on the Lake of Uri. Ramsey itself is the largest town after Douglas, but is considered more select

and aristocratic than the latter. Exceedingly good fishing may be had in the bay, which is open and unprotected, and will not bear comparison with Douglas Bay, or some of the smaller ones in the south of the island. But trees flourish better here than in the south; and the beauty of Ramsey lies in the wooded heights that rise above the town, and form a most picturesque background to the view as seen from the middle of the bay.

There are not a few other places in the Isle of Man which the traveller with time at his disposal should by no means omit to visit. Foremost among these is Injebreck, a lovely spot, which recalls Moore's description of the vale of Avoca in *The Meeting of the Waters*. 'The soft magic of streamlet and hill' casts its spell over the mind of the spectator as he watches the streams of East and West Baldwin mingle their waters under the shadow of the lofty peaks that tower up on either side; and the traveller from town will feel grateful that he is privileged for a short time to tread 'the cool sequestered vale of life' apart from the busy haunts of men.

THE FAMILY DIAMONDS.

CHAPTER I.

'THEY are worth several lacs of rupees.'

I had no very clear idea what was the exact value of a lac of rupees, when I answered Cousin Martha as to the supposed value of Aunt Purpose's diamonds. I knew, however, that it represented a large sum; and then, I did not care to confess an absolute ignorance on the subject, especially to Martha, who is quite two years my junior, although a good many say that she looks the older of the two. We were sitting in my little four-roomed cottage before the open casement, and with my small brown delf teapot between us, were refreshing ourselves with an early cup of tea. Although we are both unmarried, yet we prefer occupying separate tenements, the Misses being too capacious and domineering in disposition to agree well together. We are decidedly non-gregarious. Hence, we live apart, and have everything to ourselves. There were but three born Misses living—Aunt Purpose being one by marriage only—Patience (that is, myself); Martha; and Robert, a grasping, avaricious old bachelor. I know that it is not nice to detract one's relative; but Martha perfectly agrees with me in my estimate of our mutual cousin's character; therefore I think I may be allowed to record it. The last generation of Misses consisted of four brothers, the eldest of whom was Robert's father; the next, mine; the third, Martha's; while the fourth, who died childless, had been the husband of Aunt Purpose.

We of the younger generation had long been settled in our parents' native village of Nettlethorpe, happy, to a certain extent, in our mutual carpings and bickerings; when a great excitement was imported into the even tenor of our lives by the news that Thomson—the local house-agent—had been written to by Aunt Purpose, authorising him to take, in her name, a moderately sized house in our primitive little hamlet.

Now, one word about Aunt Purpose. Uncle Job, her husband, had held an official appointment in the East Indies, where he had met and

married her. Nothing was heard of them for some years; and then news arrived of his death. Again an interval of silence occurred, to be broken by the intelligence that our widowed relative, whom we had never seen, was about to come and live in the midst of us, actuated thereto by a wish to end her days amongst her husband's kindred, as she had none of her own. The fact of her being a stranger to us, would have been sufficient to have awakened a certain amount of interest in her arrival; therefore, our unusual excitement may well be understood when Robert discovered, by some means or other—he is such a terrible one for sifting and prying into things, but there! men always are so curious—that she was the owner of a most wonderful and almost priceless set of brilliants, that had been presented to her by a great Maharajah, to whose children she had been governess. Again, it was said that she was penurious and miserly in her habits, as we knew our uncle had been. He had left her everything at his death; therefore, she must be, we argued, at least comfortably rich. East Indians are never really poor. Their wealth is proverbial. Kithless and kinless, save for ourselves, her approach filled us with joyful anticipations; and already in imagination each one of us saw himself, or herself, the owner of her matchless jewels and sole inheritor of her wealth. Martha and I were just discussing our second cup, and speculating as to the time of the old lady's arrival, then daily expected, when suddenly my little maid-of-all-work, whom I had despatched to the village on a marketing expedition, dashed into the room with her arms full of packages, and her tongue charged to its extreme tip with gossip.

'Well, Mary, what is it?' asked Martha, who saw that the child was bursting with news.

'Oh, if you please, m'm, she's come, and druv all the way in 'obson's one-orse shay, with a great screaming green poll-parrot in a brass cage beside the driver, and a black woman all in white, and a red silk pocket-handkercher tied over 'er 'air, and su'thing just like a lot o' little gold pimples agrowin' out o' one side of 'er nose.—I should not have bin so long, m'm,' she added, turning apologetically to me, as she at length paused in her lengthy harangue to get back her breath, 'but I stopped to see 'em take in the luggage and things.'

There was no need for any name to be mentioned. We both knew that she could only be referring to Aunt Purpose. A rigid cross-examination followed; but all that we could elicit from our informant was that Mrs Missle was a little, shrivelled-looking old woman, with a very yellow face, and a pair of bright black eyes just like a bird.

'Did you see Mr Robert there?' I asked uneasily.

'No, m'm; though, if you please, m'm, I 'eered at the post-office as Muster Robert 'ad gone to Southampton to meet 'is aunt.'

'Just like him! Sly and mean in all that he does!' was Martha's indignant comment as she rose and began to put on her shawl and gloves.

I wanted to be by myself to think over matters, and decide as to my conduct with Aunt Purpose, so I did not press her to stay; and I could easily see that she was quite as eager to leave me.

'Ought we to call to-night?' I asked her,

resolving that whatever underhand means Robert might have taken to forestall us in her favour, we two would be loyal to each other.

'I don't think so,' she answered in her usual doubting, hesitating manner. 'You see, she has chosen to come quietly and without telling us the time of her arrival; so I think it would be much better if we were to leave it now till the morning. She is certain to be tired after her journey. You might, however, send Mary round a little later to inquire after her, and with your love.'

After Martha had left me, I sat cogitating and considering. To wait till the morrow seemed a long time, when we knew that Robert was already laying siege to Aunt Purpose's affections. I felt uncomfortable at the idea of letting him have the field all to himself. At anyrate—I argued to myself—there could be no harm in just going to see how matters were. 'Fair-play is a jewel all the world over.' I could easily explain everything to Martha, afterwards.

The determination was speedily put into execution; and I was soon equipped for my visit. As I passed out by the larder, my eyes fell upon a small corn-flour *blanc-mange* that I had made that morning. 'Poor thing!' I said to myself as I took up the dish on which it stood, and covering it with a small napkin, placed it in a basket; 'I daresay her appetite is not of the best; and then those East Indians always have bad digestions. I will take it to her. I am sure it will do her good. There's a whole pint of milk in it.'

Rose Cottage, whither I was bound, was about ten minutes' walk from my abode; but as I walked very fast, it could not have taken me more than eight, at the outside, to reach it. A strange servant-girl opened the door to me—one of that stupid, interfering Thomson the house-agent's importations. As if he could not have found a good honest girl in Nettlethorpe—one that we all knew—instead of bringing a stranger into the family!

'Aunt Purpose—Mrs Job Missle, I mean—has arrived, I believe?' I began, as the girl stood filling up the doorway, as if to bar my entrance.

'Yes, ma'am.'

'Will you give her this, with my love? Say, her niece, Miss Patience Missle, brought it. It is a little *blanc-mange*, and is made quite plain, without any flavouring.'

She took it from me, and would have left me standing on the doorstep—no Nettlethorpe girl would have dared to treat me thus—but I pushed by her.

'I will wait here,' I said, as I walked straight into the little sitting-room at the back and seated myself on a very hard-bottomed chair.

A door on one side led into the kitchen. Peeping through it, for it was half-opened, I saw the black attendant. She was dressed just as described by Mary; but she was holding something in her hand that, at that moment, excited in me a great deal more curiosity than either her colour or her costume. It was a small fancy basket of a peculiar pattern, that seemed very familiar to me. The sight of it awoke a sad misgiving at my heart, more especially as it was filled with eggs of that peculiar dark hue common to the poultry of Brahma and Cochinchina. Now, Martha possessed a basket the

exact counterpart of the one held by the black woman; and when I add that she owned half-a-dozen pets of the second-mentioned breed of fowls, my misgivings will be readily understood. To relieve my doubts, I crept into the kitchen, and overcoming my repugnance to people of colour, peeped over the black woman's shoulder. She gave a start, and rolling the whites of her black eyes at me, muttered something in her own language.—Yes; I was right! Martha had deceived me! There, on each egg, in her large skewery handwriting, was the name of the hen by which it had been laid, and the date of the interesting event. It is indeed disgraceful, when one's own flesh and blood turns against one! I returned to the little sitting-room, and then the servant came down.

'Missus is very much obliged to you, ma'am, for the *blanc-mange*; and she hopes that you'll excuse her, as she's too tired to see any one to-night.'

'How long is it since Miss Martha called?' I asked, taking the bull by the horns at once.

'She has only just left, ma'am.'

'Did she see your mistress?'

'Oh, dear no, ma'am. She had a message just like yours. Nothing more, ma'am.'

We had now reached the porch; and I was about to put a number of questions to her about her mistress, when a rough, hoarse voice called out: 'Get out, get out! Mind your own business!'

It so startled me—I thought it was the black woman—that I allowed the girl to close the door upon me before I recollected that it was only the parrot, whose cage had been hung just within the lobby. Vexed at my foolish conduct, I hastened homewards. As I neared Laurestinus Villa—Robert's residence—I met him. He was looking very hot and tired.

'What do you think, Patience?' he asked in a mysterious voice as I stopped to speak to him. 'She hasn't arrived. That fellow Thomson sent me a wild-geese chase to Southampton by telling me that she was coming over in the *Ruby*. Well, the *Ruby* is in; but she has brought no Purpose Missle in her.'

'No,' I answered with a quiet triumph, for I was glad that he had been done; 'of course not, because she came in the *Stella*. I read the name on her luggage. I have just come from the Cottage, where I was received most kindly. If you had come back by the express instead of waiting for the parliamentary, you would have had the pleasure of travelling with her.'

'Then, you've seen her?' he groaned in an anxious tone, as he mopped the perspiration from his dusty face, for it is a good five miles' walk from the station.

'Well, no—not exactly. The fact is, she is too tired to see any one to-night; but she sent me such a kind message.' With this I left him.

I knew, however, that he would never rest without going to the Cottage; so, as soon as I got home, I planted myself at my bedroom window to watch his movements. In a short time I saw him come out into his garden. His face had been washed and his coat changed. First, he picked two or three large sycamore leaves, with which he lined a small flat punnet basket that he held in his other hand; then he advanced to the south

wall, and stopped before the nectarine tree about which he makes such a fuss. One, two, three. Oh! how carefully and reluctantly he picked the ripe fruit! I could not help smiling as I watched him. I knew the action must have gone to his heart. He says that he sends the produce of his garden to his friends; but I know better. They are paying friends, and their address is not a hundred miles from Covent Garden Market. Robert is too genuine a Missle to give a *quid* without receiving a *quo*. The fruit was carefully arranged in the basket, and covered with more leaves; and then I saw him start off down the road to—I was as positive about it as if I had followed him every step of the way—Rose Cottage. Martha was right in stigmatising him as both mean and sly. It was too bad of him. His income must have been nearly double ours, which could well have stood an increase. His gallantry as a man should have made him remember that we were of the weaker sex, and he should have given way accordingly. But there—man again!—it is never anything else with them but self and number one, while we poor women may go to the wall or do the best we can.

WILL POULTRY-FARMING PAY?

THIS is just one of those questions to which an off-hand answer cannot be given. It is difficult to say either 'Yes' or 'No,' for the reason, that the experiment of poultry-farming on a large scale has been so rarely tried in a way to insure success. One or two experiments in poultry-breeding on an extensive plan have, however, lately been ventured upon; but no statistics of the results, so far as we know, have yet been offered to the public.

One reason why those who require to purchase poultry have to pay so much for it, is because of its having to pass through many hands, each exacting tribute before it reaches our tables. Indeed, much of what we consume has hitherto come from France, Belgium, and Holland; and nowadays we are beginning to receive supplies from places more distant. It is somewhat surprising—considering that in London alone there is annually consumed over three and a half millions of domestic fowls, in addition to a million head of turkeys, geese, and ducks—that successful attempts have not yet been made to cultivate for home consumption on a large scale. But even in France, surprising as the statement may prove to many, there is no such establishment in existence as a farm solely or chiefly devoted to the rearing of poultry. From inquiries conducted by the writer of this paper, in Normandy and Brittany, and in districts to the south-west of Paris, as well as in the capital itself, it became evident that in no instance was a flock of over two hundred and fifty domestic fowls kept in one place, by way of a commercial speculation; indeed, it would be quite safe to assume that, throughout France, the stocks of fowls kept by individuals do not average half a dozen. But, as we all know, there are thousands of persons in France who farm, or possess in their own right, a little bit of land, nearly every one of whom keeps a few fowls as an adjunct to his business of farming or gardening, and to which he is enabled, from the paucity

of their number, to devote the closest individual attention. By such means the French have obtained a reputation for the excellence of their poultry, much of which, in consequence, finds its way to the London market. It may be stated that the value of the eggs and poultry imported into this country from the continent in 1879 amounted to L.2,728,009; a small proportion of the sum is, we believe, paid for game; but substantially the money so expended is for poultry and eggs, the number of the latter imported in 1879 being 766,707,840.

It will be obvious enough from these figures that there is abundance of room at the present time for the breeding of poultry on some systematic plan. Just now, our supplies for table use, so far as they are provided in our own country, are chiefly collected from cottage cultivators, from persons who keep from half-a-dozen to twenty hens, and who either rear a few broods every season for the market, or keep their fowls only to lay eggs, for which there is a constant demand at remunerative prices. In the case of rearing a brood of chickens for market, great pains are taken to have them ready for sale at a time when they shall be of more than ordinary value. 'Spring chickens'—young fowls hatched early in the year, and carefully fed and fattened for the London season, which begins in February—bring a high price even to the cottagers who rear them, the cost to the consumer being correspondingly enhanced. The persons who travel in the county of Surrey, which is famed for its fowls, for the purpose of buying, and who are locally known as 'higglers,' will give at the rate of twenty-one shillings, or even more, for a dozen; these will be carried away to some centre of the trade, to be resold to an agent with a London connection, at probably a profit of four or five shillings per dozen; and these spring chickens, after being well fed for ten days or a fortnight, will be killed, plucked, and 'set up' for the London wholesale dealer at Leadenhall or Newgate Market, who is supposed to sell what he has consigned to him on commission, charging a percentage. These fowls will ultimately find their way to the clubs, restaurants, and private houses of the Great Metropolis; those who purchase them having paid to the retail dealer prices varying from eight to fourteen shillings a pair. In the very height of the London season, when the supply is not equal to the demand, 'fancy' prices can easily be obtained. It would not, we believe, be an extravagant estimate to say that seven shillings a pair could readily be obtained in the spring months for twenty thousand pairs of well fattened and nicely prepared chickens, if the breeder were to send direct to the poultry commission agents in Leadenhall Market. Taking the average market price for Surrey fowls—not the West End retail price—it was six shillings and threepence per fowl during January, February, March, and April 1880; and for about eight months of every year, similar prices are quoted. Sussex fowls are priced at about one shilling and sixpence less per head; whilst Boston (Lincolnshire) are cheaper; and Irish cheapest of all.

Enormous numbers of poultry are raised in Ireland for the Scottish and English markets. In Belfast, there are dealers who do nothing else but buy fowls for exportation to Liverpool and Glasgow, to be placed in the English and Scotch

markets; the more extensive dealers having also a retail shop, in which to dispose at a cheap rate of such fowls as are unfit to be sent across the water. These dealers attend all the little markets, and purchase their supplies from the small and large poultry-rearers, who arrive with their produce in carts, or in creels carried by donkeys. Much of the business is done by 'jobbers,' who correspond to the Surrey and Sussex 'higglers.' They intercept the peasantry and small farmers on their way to market, and are usually successful in making a deal, which they turn over to the wholesale buyer at a penny or twopence of profit on each of the domestic fowls, and of from threepence to a shilling on each turkey. Some of these jobbers who have a little capital, make a profit of from a hundred to five hundred pounds per annum, as they enter into contracts to send all their purchases during the season to the men who export; and having thus secured an outlet, they attend all the out-of-the-way markets, and obtain pretty nearly a monopoly of the business, making, as we may say, their own prices. Some of the large Irish dealers will purchase a hundred dozen of fowls a day for export; and a Liverpool retailer has been known to dispose of seven hundred cock-turkeys received from Ireland in one week, that amount of business being done *after* Christmas week. These figures present some idea of the magnitude of the Irish poultry-trade. The best part of Ireland for the production of common fowls is Ulster, the breeders in that province paying great attention to the various crosses, and to the rearing and feeding of their poultry. In Dublin, they produce fine capons and ducklings much earlier than in any other part of Ireland. There are no distinct poultry-farms in any part of the country; but active farmers, when harvest is early, will purchase from the small breeders two or three hundred geese, and have them herded on the stubbles for a few weeks. A large trade is also done with Ireland in living geese, which are in large demand by English farmers who have early stubbles, in order to be fattened for Christmas.

An impression is prevalent among those who are only half informed on the subject, that a fowl may be kept for 'almost nothing;' and consequently, to keep a hundred hens and cocks would cost very little money, whilst the produce in eggs and chickens would yield an ample profit. On such an hypothesis, some enthusiastic persons exclaim: 'Why not start a poultry-farm, and breed chickens in thousands!' It is possible that some day such a scheme may be inaugurated, and also possible that it may prove a success. But before real success can be achieved, before it can be demonstrated that poultry-farming will pay—which is the grand aim and end of all such schemes—there is much to consider, and not one but a hundred details must be encountered before money can be earned. It was a saying of an eminent agriculturist, that almost anything could be achieved in farming if a person liked to spend twenty-two-and-sixpence in the pound in achieving it; and there are persons now engaged in the poultry-trade, or who at anyrate keep fowls, whose eggs probably cost them a halfpenny each more than they can obtain for them; and whose chickens, for which they receive one shilling and ninepence a-head, cost, to hatch and breed, half-a-

crown apiece! That, of course, would never do in poultry-farming as a business. The farm must be made to pay; and how to balance accounts and leave a balance on the right side, is the question.

It undoubtedly pays our cottagers to keep half-a-dozen fowls, because the doing so involves but little extra expenditure; the fragments of the family food, with such little additions, in the way of slugs and worms, as they can pick up about the door, serve to fatten them; and as a rule, there are no bounds to the ground they may range over. As for the sitting, or as she is termed in Scotland, the 'clocking hen,' she monopolises the attention of the mistress of the cottage; and the little chicks are most carefully attended to as soon as they begin to make their appearance. When, however, we come to extensive poultry-rearing, the conditions are vastly altered. When food has to be purchased by the ton-weight, and a rent of from thirty to fifty shillings paid for every acre of ground devoted to the fowls—when special houses have to be built for their accommodation—when interest has to be charged for use of capital, and considerable amounts have to be expended in wages—the pounds, shillings, and pence incidental to the maintenance of a stock of poultry numbering a thousand head, present a totally different aspect from what they do when examined in connection with a cottager's dozen of hens, managed by the cottager's wife, and costing almost nothing for food. It is possible, however, to make it appear on paper that a handsome profit will be realised by the fowl-farmer; nor is it at all impossible that the success which can be shown in theory might with due care become a reality, if the affair be gone about in the right way.

Those venturing upon the organisation of a fowl-farm on an extensive scale, would require to be well advised before doing so; as the outlay, in the shape of expenditure for stock, the erection of proper buildings, and the payment of rent and wages, would undoubtedly be very considerable. The selection of the particular breed or breeds of fowls to be kept, would in itself necessitate a considerable knowledge of the trade. It would have to be determined, too, at the outset whether the farmer was to 'go in' for eggs, or for breeding and selling chickens and fowls. 'You see, sir,' said a Surrey 'higgler' to us, upon a recent occasion, 'some hens is good layers, and some is good sitters, and you don't generally do in both. Them as buys chickens and fowls, like to see 'em plump and white. For my part, sir, if I was going for to produce instead of to lay, I would keep none but Dorkings—they always plumps out nice, and makes a good price.'

There is at the present time a wonderful variety of hens in the country; but the best layers are found to be Andalusians, Minorcas, Hamburgs, and Leghorns. The first two classes lay very large eggs in proportion to their size. The following is the number that may reasonably be expected from these varieties. Andalusians, one hundred and eighty-five, six eggs to the pound; Minorcas, about the same number, the eggs weighing eight to the pound; Hamburgs, one hundred and fifty-six eggs, about ten of which weigh one pound; whilst Leghorns will sometimes lay as many

as one hundred and sixty, of nine to the pound. Houdans are also very good layers; as are likewise the La Flèche breed. The number of eggs given are calculated on the average, some individual fowls probably laying a few more, some a few less, than the numbers given above. Many circumstances conspire to affect the laying powers of hens, as an early season, suitable food, and a good run of ground. The Andalusian fowl would perhaps be an excellent one with which to stock a farm designed to produce both eggs and chickens, as the latter feather quickly, and grow with rapidity. Pullets of that breed have been known to begin laying when they were nineteen weeks old.

It will perhaps be found, when 'hen-farming' on a large scale is entered upon, that the best mode of procedure will be to separate the stock into collections of, say, a hundred each—each to be provided with a separate living-house and run. And in the matter of providing a hen-run, the farmer must not be niggardly of his space; for a thousand or twelve hundred fowls, there should at least be a run of twenty-five acres of ground, of the most varied kind. The land may of course be utilised in the production of food for the animals, as lettuces, greens, potatoes, barley, &c.; whilst a part of it might be utilised as an orchard for the production of fruit. Portions of the ground, half an acre here and there, should also be frequently turned over for the benefit of the hens; it would admit of their finding a large supply of worms and larvæ, of which they are very fond.

It has been calculated that fowls *en masse* may be fed at a fraction less than a penny per week for each animal; and with the data we have given, it should not prove difficult for any person to determine the L. s. d. of fowl-farming. The expenditure will resolve itself into rent, taxes, and wages—a thousand fowls would require at least three attendants—as well as interest on money expended on the original purchase of fowls, and on the buildings and alterations involved. The cost of food for a thousand animals would be about four pounds a week. The income would of course be made up from the sale of eggs at, say, one shilling a dozen; the sale of chickens at, say, one-and-ninapence or two shillings each. An item in the credit account would necessarily be the valuable manure obtainable from a large stock. The receipts from the orchard would enter into the account, as would also the quantity of food produced on the acreage of ground. As regards the cost of a healthy breeding and laying stock to be acquired gradually, a fair price would probably be five shillings per head. There is an annual percentage of loss from accidents and disease; but such can only be calculated from experience. Various contrivances for the artificial hatching of eggs have lately been patented, and some of these, if successful, might be brought into use in poultry-farming. In various accounts of trials of hydro-incubators which we have perused, it is said that in some cases ninety per cent. of the eggs have been hatched. If that should prove to be true, there can be no doubt that the use of these artificial hatching-machines will become an important factor in the increased production of poultry.

We have in the foregoing remarks kept chiefly

in view the increasing of our supplies of domestic poultry. Turkey-rearing is more difficult; and the production of ducks and geese is a separate branch of the business.

PRINTERS' BLUNDERS.

A good deal has been written from time to time on the subject of printers' blunders. Few more entertaining topics could be discussed, and fresh material may be gathered almost any day from the newspapers, and even less ephemeral publications. Though many of the 'atrocities' which emanate from the type composing-room are intensely ludicrous, yet, as a rule, they are rather productive of merriment than mischief. The casual reader can, however, but faintly realise the mental agony inflicted by these fantastic tricks upon the unfortunate author whose brightest gems of thought and sentiment have been destroyed; or upon the public speaker, who finds that his oration, as presented to the world, contains expressions which he did not use, and never would have used. The editor can set himself and the orator right by correcting such errata in the next issue of his paper, and can have revenge by discharging both the compositor and the official whose duty it was to revise and correct the 'proofs;' but these considerations afford little comfort after all the little world you move in has laughed at the blunders. It must not be forgotten, moreover, that no compositor or reviser, however careful and experienced, is infallible, and that the successors of the delinquents might next day perpetrate even greater enormities. The author, it may also happen, is probably as much to blame as the compositor, as his manuscript may have been illegible, incomplete, or inaccurate. The majority of writers for the press leave far too much to the printer, not only in the matter of deciphering their scrawling caligraphy, but in punctuation and various other minor but essential details. Yet, on the other hand, there is no absolute safeguard against being victimised, for the most legible manuscript, even print itself, may be bungled by carelessness or stupidity in the composing-room.

The perversity of some printers is tantalising in the extreme. They frequently take it upon themselves to alter and amend what they, in their wisdom, suppose to be wrong, while it is really perfectly correct; and they as often adhere persistently to the manuscript, when it might be apparent to the meanest intelligence that a word has been omitted, or that, from some other cause, the sentence is imperfect or erroneous. Or they may substitute one word for another, making utter nonsense of the context. For instance, a compositor put into the mouth of one of Mr Gladstone's most ardent admirers the statement that the right honourable gentleman was 'the spout' of the Liberal party, when 'spirit' was the term employed. Another represented the Christian religion as enjoining *mahogany*, when it should have been 'monogamy;' while a third makes a *savant* learnedly state that 'the civilisation of the nineteenth century is a country organ [purely Aryan] development.'

The omission or addition of a single letter, or the substitution of a wrong one, sometimes pro-

duces the most comical results. A glowing writer is made to speak of certain of the works of Nature as 'silent preachers of immorality' [immortality]. It is rather imposing on the credulity of the public to state that 'a waterman rowing by at the time of the occurrence was knocked down, and one of his ears [oars] was carried at least thirty yards away;' and it seems an ungenerous reflection upon the bravery of the Peruvians to say that they 'expected to accomplish great things with their feet' [fleet]. Still more unkind was it to describe the table decorations at a recent fashionable wedding as being composed of *pot-house* instead of 'hothouse' flowers. A Scotch evening paper congratulated a gardener not long ago on having, at a local horticultural show, produced the 'best six jargonelle pears fit for the stable' [table]. The *violet* [for violet] bouquet which, according to another contemporary, was presented to a lady at a public demonstration, should have been at the same exhibition. What sort of a biblical education had the compositor received who was responsible for the following? 'If they are true men, they would refuse to sell their birthright for a mess of *postage*.' And what is to be thought of the profane individual who, in setting up the verdict 'died by the visitation of God,' altered the fourth word to *hesitation*?

It may be thought that most of the errata we have quoted must have been due to illegible writing, and in all probability they were. One would expect that people who have sufficient leisure to make poetry should also have time to write out their effusions in a legible hand. Such is not always their practice, however; at least poets seem to complain as much of the printer's tricks as other classes. In a poem by a young lady, the line, 'Oh, for a heart full of sweet yearning!' occurred in the manuscript. But in print the last word appeared as *yearling*; and the poetess very naturally wrote to the editor that the compositor who had set up her effusion was a calf. There is a funny sketch by Max Adeler, in which he describes an interview between the editor of a newspaper and an outraged poet, who has come to complain of the publication of his contribution, entitled *The Surcease of Sorrow*, in which the line

Take away the jingling money; it is only glittering dross,

is rendered:

Take away thy jeering monkey on a sorely glandered hoss.

And in another verse, the words

I am weary of the tossing of the ocean as it heaves,
has blossomed into:

I am wearing out my trousers till they're open at the knees.

These, of course, are fictitious blunders; but it is not too much to say that they are founded on fact, and do not exaggerate very greatly the printer's capacity for burlesque. That versatile individual, however, makes an occasional essay in tragedy as well. A western newspaper reporting the annual meeting of the Glasgow Maternity Hospital, announced the other day that the

children *burned alive* in the Hospital during the year numbered two hundred and twenty-three, and at their own homes nine hundred and sixteen. It is necessary to explain that the word 'burned' should read 'born.' Serious consequences might have resulted from the statement which appeared in an editorial article, to the effect that a certain eminent statesman was 'very fond of his *opium*,' had it not been satisfactorily explained that the editor wrote 'opinion.' What a sensation must have been caused in aristocratic circles by the announcement in a London journal of the Duchess of Hamilton's 'bankruptcy,' when it was only Her Grace's 'birthday' that was referred to! It was probably from a due sense of the fitness of things that a compositor, anxious that she should follow the example, perhaps, of one of her own heroines, married a novelist to a *prisoner*, whereas it was only a 'Prussian' to whom she had been espoused. Another London compositor was equally unhappy in spreading the intelligence that a certain lady had 'died of her marriage,' when it should have been of a hemorrhage. Alluding to Mr E. A. Freeman's peculiar political opinions, a writer was made to say, 'Coming as it does from one who has gained real distinction as a *barbarian*,' &c., when the complimentary word 'historian' was intended. In the same article, Mr Gladstone was represented as addressing a noisy *snob*, instead of a 'mob.'

Careless writing, with imperfectly formed letters, and a general appearance of dash and haste, is as frequently the cause of such blunders as the stupidity of the printer. It may have been due to some such cause that a person who advertised for a gardener, adding the information that there was 'no glass'—that is, no greenhouse—had the worry of seeing this appear as 'one glass;' naturally attended with inquiries from interested applicants wishing to know 'if it was in the forenoon,' and whether or not it was 'hot.' Again, a lady who was desirous of securing a housemaid, sent an advertisement to that effect to the local newspaper; but the notice when it appeared mortified the lady by representing her as advertising for a 'horseman.' There is a rollicking song by a certain Scottish Professor, in which he says:

I can like a hundred women,
I can love a score.

But a compositor who put this in type changed the last word into 'scone,' thus dividing the learned poet's loves and likings between the Court of Venus and the baker.

Transposition of lines and words is also a frequent source of blunders, which in such cases are mainly due to the compositor. During an epidemic in a country-town in Scotland, three or four children in one family died in one week. About the same time, there occurred a marriage of some distinction in the district; notices of both events duly appearing in the local paper. But the friends of the married pair were staggered to read, after the enumeration of the names of the officiating clergymen, and those of the happy bride and bridegroom and their relations, the startling announcement that 'they were all interred yesterday in the cemetery.' It turned out, on explanation being required, that these words should have been appended to the notice of the death of the children above mentioned; but the compositor, in

a moment of stupidity or forgetfulness, had placed them instead after the notice of the fashionable wedding.

Numerous blunders are to be found where technicalities, proper names, and figures occur; but these are often detected by the initiated alone. To those unacquainted with the game of golf, for example, 'nursed a short put' is not much more unintelligible than 'missed a short put,' the phrase used by the reporter. The curiosity of bibliophiles and entomologists must have been excited when they read of the sale of a book entitled 'The Theatre of *Woodbugs*;' and though the former might unravel the mystery, it would hardly occur to the general reader that the work in question was *The Theatre of Worldlings*. Proper names are peculiarly liable to mutilation, as may be readily imagined. By the misplacing or multiplication of figures, some of the most astounding statistics have been produced, and we may sometimes read of events occurring on the 30th of February, or equally remarkable dates.

Were even the most carefully conducted newspaper to present its readers, say once a month, with a record of all the typographical errata which creep into its columns, the list would probably prove one of the most interesting features of the publication. Yet, after all, considering the great rapidity with which the daily journal is composed and printed, the wonder is, not that mistakes occur, but that they are so comparatively rare. Our larger daily papers have literary matter in them equal to double what is comprised in an ordinary three-volume novel; and when it is remembered the greater portion of this matter has to be put in type in less than twenty-four hours, it is little short of marvellous that such great accuracy is attained. The daily newspaper may justly be regarded as one of the most striking illustrations of what can be accomplished, when the pressure of the time demands it, by human ingenuity and organisation.

ON THE USE OF FLOWERS.

Our outward life requires them not;
Then wherefore had they birth?—
To minister delight to man,
To beautify the Earth.

M. HOWITT.

I AM so fond of flowers, that I must ask your forbearance if I seem to give their cultivation too high a place amongst the duties and pleasures of life. They always seem to me to be so fresh and pure, as if just from the hand of God, that I think their value can scarcely be too highly estimated. One of the first uses of flowers is, I believe, the delight and refreshment they give to many a weary wanderer; and the help they often are not only in pleasing the eye, but of calling the anxious heart away, unconsciously, from its cares and troubles. The practice of taking a bouquet of flowers to a Sunday-school adult class, and having this carried to the bedside of some sufferer, has increased of late years, and is, I believe, a source of good to those who are sharers in the mission. The men or women who take part in such a class, look anxiously and hopefully for their turn to

be the bearers of such a treasure to their sick friend or neighbour.

Flowers have a very refining influence. The young lady who in her daily walks culls the season's brightest wayside gems, small and retiring though they may be, has her perceptions cultivated, her gentle touch improved, and her love of the beauty of form and colour intensified and increased. I have sometimes been amused to watch the gathering of a bouquet by two equally kind sisters. One, who 'does not care much for flowers,' yet delights in giving pleasure, takes her garden scissors, cuts the brightest and perhaps the largest flowers she sees, never stopping to notice that some of the petals are faded, and others following rapidly the same way. She looks here, and takes a flower she thinks is bright; there, and cuts off a handful; and having, as she believes, gathered a large and beautiful bouquet, she hands it to the lady whom she has thus stepped out of her course to please. Perhaps if we could unperceived follow those flowers to their destination, we should see the half of them lying wasted, fallen to pieces, and quite unfit to ornament the room for which they were intended; and by the thoughtless cutting of those full-grown and showy flowers, the garden may for that day have lost its brilliance. The other sister, who loves flowers for their purity and beauty, glides from plant to plant, cutting off one blossom here, which will scarcely be missed from its modest position; another there, which will bloom in full freshness in the vase—a bit of sweet-scented beauty which by its removal improves the garden, while it adds to her treasures; and so from flower to shrub, and from rose-tree to flower again, she flits along—the selection being intuitively made with such perfection, that no blossom is misplaced, or a single fading flower added to the posy.

This nicety of observation and touch does not end in the service of the garden. A mind that responds to the beauty of the floral world will never be satisfied with imperfect or coarsely finished work of any kind. The handling of flowers so constantly sets before the eye their perfection, that by-and-by the aim at perfection in all that is done becomes, as it were, second nature.

The pleasure that flowers give to invalids among the poor, who rarely see any, might teach some of us a lesson we should do well to learn. The first time I saw this was many years ago, when I was a very young housekeeper, and was startled one Sunday morning by the request, from a working blacksmith, for some grapes for his sick wife. We had no greenhouse or vinery. Our little bit of garden was most unassuming, and I could not think what made the man come to me. However, I told him that I believed a friend of ours had some early grapes and if I could get some, his wife should have them in the afternoon. My husband walked out with me to our friend's house. Some grapes were most willingly given for the invalid, and some flowers for ourselves. I took two or three pretty and sweet flowers—I remember that a carnation and two sweet-peas formed part—tied them together; and we took them with the fruit to the sick woman. We were taken up to her bedroom. There she lay, pale and emaciated, with that ominous flush on her cheeks which too

truly confirmed her husband's words. We handed her the longed-for grapes. She was 'much obliged.' But when I held out to her the few flowers I had brought, she snatched them so eagerly, that I was startled and awed to see the delight they gave to one who was evidently so near the confines of the Unknown.

I called again in a day or two, and saw the flowers carefully preserved and looking bright in a doctor's medicine bottle close by her bedside. That scene taught me a lesson I have never forgotten, and I hope it was not without its use also.

This reminds me of what occurred in a country town one autumn, now some years ago. A very young lady, the grand-daughter of the late vicar, was married. The bridal party was large, and the bride lovely. A poor young girl, dying of consumption, who had received much kindness from her more favoured friend, was brought by some kind neighbours into the market-place to see the wedding-party pass. The bride was told of this; and on leaving after the breakfast, she sent her bouquet to her afflicted friend. Who can tell the good done to each of these two girls by that thoughtful act? The lovely white flowers would speak, oh! so eloquently of the loving giver; and who shall say they did not lead the fading girl to trust more and more implicitly in the love and mercy of her ever-present God? And would not the heart of the bride be touched and softened by the remembrance that her bridal flowers, in all their purity and beauty, had brightened the room where sickness and sorrow dwelt?

I am often sorry that so few young ladies now take pleasure in the practical part of gardening. I believe they lose much healthy enjoyment. In sowing annuals, watering them, clearing away the weeds as soon as they appear, planting a few bedding-plants in a piece of garden, they would find much health-giving amusement, and might pass many profitable and pleasant hours.

THE 'WHITE WATER' OF THE ARABIAN SEA.

With reference to the phenomenon of what is known as the 'white water' of the Arabian Sea, a correspondent writes as follows: 'If the call of duty or pleasure should at any time induce any of your readers to undertake the overland journey to India, they must not fail to give instructions to be called from bed should the nocturnal phenomenon of the "white water" occur. It is more frequently seen in the months of July and August, and is principally confined to a narrow belt to the eastward of the island of Socotra, known in the charts of that sea as the Line of the Strongest Monsoon, and wherein the rain-clouds on quitting Central Africa on their passage eastward are apparently confined. Should the moon be above the horizon, an undisturbed night's rest may be anticipated, as the writer has never known the phenomenon to occur in the presence of that orb.

'To give the reader some idea of this remarkable and striking appearance, we will suppose ourselves in a steamer, about two hundred and fifty miles to the eastward of Socotra, in the position named, and in the latter end of July; time, one A.M. The monsoon is blowing strongly and steadily—the night, star-light and clear—a

light fleecy send occasionally passing rapidly to the eastward; and the good vessel bowling along at the rate of fourteen or fifteen knots an hour. Suddenly we discover a light hue in the water, which in a short while assumes a snow-white aspect, and in the course of a quarter of an hour extends to the horizon in all directions. The transformation of the water is perfect, the usually green colour of the sea having been replaced by an appearance of whiteness like that of milk. And yet, if you draw a bucket of the water for inspection and analysis, you will find that it is beautifully clear, not a vestige of anything white being visible; nor can the microscope discover anything over and above the ordinary quantity of minute life always present in sea-water within the tropics.

'The deception seems to me to admit of easy explanation, it being the result simply of reflection of colour. The vessel is passing through a light misty atmosphere, inappreciable to the eye while within its influence; and the white watery vesicles held in suspension are, in some favourable condition of air and water, reflected on the surface of the latter. When the phenomenon has lasted about an hour and a half, to the experienced eye signs of its dissolution will become visible: the vessel is, in fact, passing out of its influence, the skyline of the horizon ahead marking the limit of the mist. When clearly defined, the horizon-limit assumes an intense blackness, through which the stars shine brilliantly; and when at length the ship apparently shoots through it, the transformation seems to have been effected by magic. Looking astern, the misty atmosphere through which we have passed is distinctly visible; the intensely black sky is gradually lowering as the steamer speeds onward, presently dipping below the horizon, and obliterating all traces of this weird and impressive scene.'

LOVERS STILL.

The moonlight of romance was ours
In that remembered month of May;
We bowed to Love's compelling powers;
Yet, Love, I love thee more to-day.

Love's morn with golden glamour rose;
He held us in imperious sway;
Yet loved we not so well in those
Bright days as, Love, we love to-day.

Then Pleasure took us by the hands,
And led us up Love's shining way;
But now our love through Sorrow stands,
And Grief has made us one to-day.

As stalwart smiths alternate bring
Their blows with all the might they may,
So Hope and Fear have wrought the ring
That keeps us lovers still to-day.

More solemn blessing than the priest,
Grave Time has given us; so we pray,
When Death shall stay Life's palling feast,
We shall go lovers, as to-day.

H. B. BAILDON.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.